



Educate your children in the way in which they should go, and when they are grown, they will not depart from it. (Proverbs 22:6)

College Student Sunday
September 16, 2007

The Hierarchs of the Standing Conference
of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas

To the Most Reverend Clergy, Venerable Monastics and Devout Faithful
of the Holy Orthodox Churches in the Americas.

Dearly Beloved in Christ Jesus:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

We, the Hierarchs of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas, greet you in this new ecclesiastical year with the love and faith of Jesus Christ. Fully understanding our great responsibility to care for and sustain our young college students, we have designated the first Sunday after the Feast of the Exaltation of the Most Precious Cross as College Student Sunday. On this day we ask all of you to join with us in prayer for these important members of our Church family as they progress in their Christian formation.

Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF), a ministry and official Agency of SCOBA is making a united and concerted effort to serve our Orthodox College Community. With chapters on 240 campuses across the United States and Canada, OCF serves as a spiritual lifeline for students. Through its national and local programs, OCF assists in personal formation and provides spiritual sustenance to young Christians on campus.

In addition to class work, our Orthodox College Students are in a constant state of developing their professional and personal identities. Career paths become clearer, and interpersonal relationships grow in dramatic ways. Sometimes, the attention spent on these aspects of life pushes spiritual growth and development to the side, even to the point of disconnecting from the life of the Church. Many of us hold to the false notion that our College Students will reconnect to the Church after graduation. However, studies show that six out of ten young people who were active in their church communities in their teens do not return to their church in their twenties. Of equal concern is the condition of those who do return. College years present great challenges to belief that require a more intense effort to keep nourished in the pastures and watered by the well-springs of the Faith.

The clergy and lay campus coordinators of OCF are blessed with the spiritual gifts and the ability to share such gifts with college students. However, each of us, the faithful members of the Body of Christ, share a

responsibility to care for our young people. Through generosity of heart we can come together to provide adequate financial resources that can significantly benefit the young people of our Orthodox Church.

Consequently, with this letter we are asking our clergy to take up a collection from every parish to support this vital ministry. Additionally, we ask our clergy to provide OCF members in their parishes the opportunity to speak about their experiences with the Orthodox Christian Fellowship. In this way all Orthodox Christian parishioners will better understand the work of the OCF and participate actively in its ministry.

With thanksgiving to God and to those who support the important OCF ministry, it is our prayer that our young college students may progress on the path that leads them to Christ-like lives, and ultimately to the Kingdom of God.

With paternal blessings and love in Christ,

+Archbishop DEMETRIOS, Chairman

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

+Metropolitan PHILIP, Vice Chairman

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

+Metropolitan CHRISTOPHER, Secretary

Serbian Orthodox Church in the USA and Canada

+Metropolitan NICHOLAS of Amissos, Treasurer

American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese in the USA

+Metropolitan HERMAN

Orthodox Church in America

+Archbishop NICOLAE

Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada

+Metropolitan JOSEPH

Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church

+Metropolitan CONSTANTINE

Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA

+Bishop ILIA of Philomelion

Albanian Orthodox Diocese of America

Please Note: In our diocesan parishes, either a collection should be taken up, or a donation given from the parish treasury, for OCF. Since OCF is an agency of SCOBA, parish gifts should be sent directly to SCOBA (8 East 79th St, New York, NY 10021), earmarked OCF. The gifts should be transmitted the week of September 16, 2007.